

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A subpart of a drill string, the subpart comprising a central main section and two or more extendable elements adapted to extend under drilling conditions to contact an inner wall of ~~the~~ a borehole and to exert a compacting pressure on at least one of mud cake or cuttings present in an annulus between the drill string and said wall, wherein the two or more extendable elements include compliant elements.
2. (Previously presented) The subpart of claim 1 further comprising a bottom and top section for connection to the drill string.
3. (Previously presented) The subpart of claim 2 wherein the main section comprises one or more bores providing a return flow path for the drilling fluid and cuttings.
4. (Canceled)
5. (Previously presented) The subpart of claim 2 wherein at least one of the bottom and top sections comprises a connector adapted to connect to a drill collar section of the drill string.
6. (Previously presented) The subpart of claim 2 wherein the bottom and top section are configured to provide a force-transmitting connection to the drill string so that the subpart follows a rotational motion of the drill string generated at a surface location.
7. (Previously presented) The subpart of claim 1 wherein the two or more extendable elements are made from an abrasive resistant material.

8. (Canceled)

9. (Previously presented) The subpart of claim 1 wherein the two or more extendable elements engage under drilling conditions the wall of the borehole at an angle of attack of less than 45 degrees.

10. (Canceled)

11. (Previously presented) The subpart of claim 1 wherein the two or more extendable elements are adapted to engage the wall of the borehole when pressurized drilling fluid is pumped from a surface location through the drilling string.

12. (Previously presented) The subpart of claim 1 wherein the two or more extendable elements include one or more nozzles connected by a flow path to the inner opening of the subpart.

13. (Previously presented) The subpart of claim 1 wherein the two or more extendable elements include one or more hinge sections.

14. (Previously presented) The subpart of claim 1 wherein each of the two or more extendable elements comprises a first extendable section and a second extendable section and a hinge element connecting said first and second extendable sections.

15. (Previously presented) The subpart of claim 1 wherein each of the two or more extendable elements comprises an arcuate vane element rotatably mounted on a hinge element.

16. (Canceled)

17. (Canceled)

18. (Canceled)

19. (Canceled)

20. (Previously presented) A method of consolidating a borehole during a drilling operation comprising the steps of

- assembling a drill string including one or more subparts each having an outer circumferential surface which is contoured and adapted to engage a wall of an open uncased borehole with a low angle of attack essentially continuously exerting a compacting pressure on at least one of mud cake or cuttings present in the annulus between the drill string and said wall;
- pumping from a surface location a drilling fluid;
- using the drilling fluid to force the outer circumferential surface into contact with the formation;
- rotating said drill string from said surface location; thereby causing the subpart or subparts to slide along the wall of the borehole.

21. (Original) The method of claim 20 wherein the outer circumferential surface of the one or more subparts is essentially continuously forced into contact with the wall surrounding the borehole during the drilling operation.

22. (Canceled)

23. (Canceled)

24. (New) A subpart of a drill string, the subpart comprising a central main section and two or more extendable elements adapted to extend under drilling conditions to contact an inner wall of a borehole and to exert a compacting pressure on at least one of mud cake or cuttings present

in an annulus between the drill string and said wall, wherein each of the two or more extendable elements comprises a first extendable section and a second extendable section and a hinge element connecting said first and said second extendable sections.

25. (New) A subpart of a drill string, the subpart comprising a central main section and two or more extendable elements adapted to extend under drilling conditions to contact an inner wall of a borehole and to exert a compacting pressure on at least one of mud cake or cuttings present in an annulus between the drill string and said wall, wherein each of the two or more extendable elements comprises an arcuate vane element rotatably mounted on a hinge element.

26. (New) The method of claim 20 wherein the outer circumferential surface comprises an outer surface of one or more elements hingedly attached to the one or more subparts.

27. (New) A subpart of a drilling system, the drilling system comprising a drill string and a drill bit, the subpart comprising a contoured outer-circumferential surface that is configured to engage a wall of an open uncased borehole and exert a compacting pressure on mud cake and/or cuttings present in an annulus formed between the drill string and said wall, wherein the subpart is cylindrical in shape with an outside diameter that is smaller than a drilling diameter of the drill bit, and wherein the subpart comprises a solid body with a central conduit through which drilling fluid may flow to the drill bit and one or more peripheral conduits through which fluids in the annulus may flow.